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FARMERS'

CHECKLIST

FOR

PESTICIDE

SAFETY



FARMERS' CHECKLIST FOR PESTICIDE SAFETY

Prepared by Agricultural Research Service

Insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, and nematocides are indispensable aids to profitable farming. Though many of these pesticides are poisonous to man and animals, all of them are safe if they are applied according to label directions and if all precautions are heeded.

Be sure you are handling pesticides safely: Use this checklist when selecting, storing, mixing, or applying pesticides, when disposing of excess pesticides and empty pesticide containers, and when cleaning equipment after pesticide application.

How to Use the Checklist

Tack this list up in a conspicuous place—perhaps on the door of your pesticide storage shed or on the edge of the storage shelves. Then, when you are preparing to work with a pesticide, read each statement in the applicable section (SELECTING PESTICIDES, STORING PESTICIDES, MIXING PESTICIDES, etc.) and ask yourself if the statement accurately describes the practice you now follow. Your answer should be “Yes.” If the statement does not describe the practice you now follow, change the practice to agree with the statement.

When your pesticide-handling practices agree with all of the checklist statements, you can be sure you are using pesticides safely—without hazard to yourself, your family, or your neighbors; to your crops or livestock; or to fish and farm wildlife.

Selecting Pesticides

- Label of selected pesticide lists the name of the pest that you plan to control.
- Label describes the proposed application of the pesticide—the crop, animal, or site on which you plan to use the material.
- Selected pesticide is recommended by competent authority—your county agricultural agent or advisor, specialists from your State agricultural experiment station, or current publications of your State experiment station or extension service or USDA.

Storing Pesticides

- Pesticide is stored in its original container, *never in a food or beverage container.*
- Pesticide container is stored out of reach of children, animals, and irresponsible adults.
- Pesticide is kept where food, feed, seed, and other pesticides cannot be contaminated by it.
- Pesticide is kept in a dry place.
- Pesticide container is examined periodically to insure that it has not developed leaks or tears.

Mixing Pesticides

- Person mixing pesticide has recently read the label and understands all label directions and precautions.
- Pesticide label makes no mention of the need for protective clothing or equipment; *or—*
Person mixing pesticide is furnished with protective clothing or equipment described on pesticide label.
- Pesticides are mixed or prepared in the open air or in a well-ventilated room.

- Special containers—drums or pails—are provided for mixing pesticide; never use seed, food, or beverage containers.
- Pesticide container is opened carefully to avoid billowing of dusts or splashing of liquids.
- Pesticide is poured carefully to avoid spilling.
- Pesticide is accurately measured and thoroughly mixed.
- Spilled pesticide is cleaned up promptly.
- Pesticide spilled on skin is immediately washed off with plenty of soap and water.
- Clothing wetted with spilled pesticide is changed immediately and is laundered before being worn again.
- Person mixing pesticide refrains from smoking, eating, or drinking until after he washes thoroughly.

Applying Pesticides

- Person who is to apply pesticide has recently read the pesticide label and understands all directions and precautions.
- Output of application machine (sprayer, duster, spreader, or injector) is checked frequently to prevent excessive application.
- Person applying pesticide is furnished with protective clothing or equipment if label prescribes it.
- Pesticide is applied at times or intervals specified on the label. **Especially observed are the specified intervals between treatment of crops and harvesting or feeding and between last treatment of animals and slaughter.**

- No more than the recommended amount of pesticide is applied.
- Pesticide is applied so it will not drift onto or contaminate nearby crops and pastures, bee-yards, livestock, fish and wildlife, streams, ponds, and other water-supply sources.
- Dust or spray is not applied on windy day.
- *Insecticides* are applied when honey bees or other pollinating insects are not visiting crops being treated.
- At least 48 hours before large areas are treated with insecticides, nearby beekeepers are notified so they can protect their bees.

Cleaning Up

- Equipment used in preparing or applying pesticide is thoroughly cleaned after use.
- Operator of application equipment bathes thoroughly after applying pesticide and changes into clean clothing. Work clothing is laundered before it is worn again.
- Before being used for applying insecticide or fungicide on crops, sprayers that have been used for 2,4-D, 2,4,5-T, MCPA, silvex, or 4-(2,4-DB) are given a special cleansing with ammonia or activated charcoal and detergent.
- Excess pesticide solution is poured out in an isolated area where it will not contaminate crops or water or injure domestic animals or wildlife.
- Empty pesticide bags and cardboard containers are burned and the ashes are buried in an isolated place where they will not contaminate water supplies. *Keep out of the smoke.*
- Glass and metal containers are broken or crushed and are buried in an isolated place where they will not contaminate water supplies.

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In Case of Accident

If a pesticide is swallowed, or if a person suddenly feels sick while using a pesticide or shortly afterwards, call a physician immediately. Be prepared to tell the physician the name of the pesticide involved—the chemical name is listed on the label—and to describe any information on the label regarding treatment of poisoning. Follow the physician's instructions for first aid.

Save the pesticide container and any attached labeling to show the physician when he arrives. Information provided on the label can be invaluable; do not allow it to get misplaced during the confusion of providing emergency treatment for the victim.

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